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AMERICAN ART NEWS.

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Advice as to the placing at public or private sale of art work of all kinds, pictures, sculptures, furniture, bibelots, etc., will be given at the office of the AMERICAN ART NEWS, and also counsel as to the value of art works and the obtaining of the best "expert" opinion on the same. For these services a nominal fee will be charged. Persons having art works and desirous of disposing or obtaining an idea of their value will find our service on these lines a saving of time, and, in many instances of unnecessary expense. It is guaranteed that any opinion given will be so given without regard to personal or commercial motives.

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We are so frequently called upon to pass upon the value of art works for collectors and estates, for the purpose of insurance, sale, or, more especially to determine whether prior appraisals made to fix the amount due under the inheritance or death taxes are just and correct ones—and so often find that such former appraisals have been made by persons not qualified by experience or knowledge of art quality or market values, with resultant deception and often overpayments of taxes, etc.—that we suggest to all collectors and executors the advisability of consulting our Bureau of Appraisal either in the first place or for revision of other appraisals. This Bureau is conducted by persons in every way qualified by experience and study of art works for many years, and especially of market values, both here and abroad; our appraisals are made without regard to anything but quality and values, and our charges are moderate—our chief desire being to save our patrons and the public from ignorant, needless and costly appraisal expenditure.

ART SALE RECORDS.

Collectors, dealers and others interested are reminded that the first two numbers of Sales of the Year for 1915, in pamphlet form, are still on sale at the AMERICAN ART NEWS office, 15 East 40 St., at 25 cents each, postage prepaid. No. 1 is devoted to the Bratton Ives Collection of Prints sold at the American Art Galleries April 12-14 and No. 2 to the Blakeslee and Duveen Picture Sales, under the same auspices, at the Plaza Hotel Ball Room, April 21-23 and April 29.

THE OCTOBER BURLINGTON.

Tancred Borenius, in the October number of the Burlington Magazine, writes of Giovanni di Paolo's "Sts. Fabian and Sebastian," owned by Mr. Robert Ross and which reproduced for the first time forms, the frontispiece. Herbert P. Horne follows with some "Notes on Luca della Robbia" based on Prof. Allan Marquand's work on the Sculptor, and supplemented by original and illuminating notes by the reviewer. Campbell Dodgson discusses "Two New Drawings by Durer in the British Museum," a jousting scene and a cavalcade. Sir Martin Conway has the opening article on the much scattered Bamberg treasury. F. Schmidt-Degener writes of a Dossi in the Boyman's Museum; A. F. Kendrick has the first article on the Tapestries at Eastnor Castle, and C. J. Holmes writes of an attractive portrait of a woman by Ferdinand Bol owned by W. R. C. Witt. Lionel Cust talks of the Mona Lisa with particular reference to the work claimed by Mr. John R. Eyre to be another version of the subject, and now Mr. Cust rather unkindly says "apparently added to the increasing number of doubtful old masters in the Museum at Boston, U. S. A." Roger Fry has an appreciative note on Sir William Van Horne. The Burlington may be had of the American agent, James B. Townsend, 15 E. 40 St.

A JUDGE'S CURIOUS CHARGE.

If the published story of the trial of the suit in Philadelphia last week of the artist Gruppe against the collector Kinsley to recover the value of a canvas attributed to Mauve, told in our last issue, is correct—the instructions or charge of Judge Dickinson to the jury—namely that that body would not have to consider whether or not a picture in question was by Mauve, but only whether an agreement to purchase the picture had been made by Kinsley—was a curious, and it seems to us, an illogical one.

The defendant, Kinsley, produced a witness, a young artist named Albers, who testified that the figures on the canvas were not true to Nature, while the forte of Mauve was in making his figures true to Nature. Gruppe's witness, Mr. Charles F. Haseltine, artist and dealer, on the other hand, testified that the work was unquestionably by Mauve.

Are we to understand that if these witnesses or others, had testified that the picture was a spurious one, that Judge Dickinson would have ruled that Mr. Kinsley was bound by an agreement to take from Mr. Gruppe, at a figure agreed upon beforehand a work by Mauve, that he was, therefore, bound to accept and pay for, a work that competent authorities declared not to be what the agreement called for? How could the Jury have decided, even on the Judge's charge that Mr. Kinsley was bound to carry out the agreement with Mr. Gruppe, had it not felt, and presumably on Mr. Haseltine's testimony, that the picture was a genuine example of the dead Dutch master?

It is to be hoped that Judge Dickinson's ruling will not act as a precedent in future cases of the kind, for, if it should, of what use is competent testimony on the validity of art works?

THE MUSEUM COMPLIMENTED.

The Metropolitan Museum has "arrived," as the French would say, or in other words, has reached the prominence as an art Institution that the great art Museums of Europe have long enjoyed, one of the chief proofs of which, is the calling into question by writers and critics of the validity or unrepresentative character of some, at least, of their possessions or exhibits.

While there have been sporadic criticisms in the American press, for some years, of this or that work owned and shown at the Metropolitan, it has remained for Mr. William Huntington Wright, extracts from whose article in the current issue of the Forum magazine entitled "The Paintings of the Metropolitan Museum," we give elsewhere in this issue; to make a general and somewhat scathing criticism of the validity and lack of representative character of the pictures—chiefly the Old Masters, in the Museum.

It would appear that Mr. Wright is more desirous of achieving a reputation for erudition in the history of painting, than of endeavoring to accomplish a judicial summing up of the merits and defects of the Museum's pictures, and it would also seem that he is, to judge from his article, not sufficiently aware of the difficulties that any Museum, and especially one in a country still young in art, finds in acquiring not only unquestionably authentic, but even first class or representative examples of artists, and especially of those long dead and gone.

One would really think, in perusing the article, that Michael Angelos, Da Vincis and Raphaels, could be picked up on the streets of European Capitals any day, and that the easiest thing in the world is to secure old pictures whose authorship will not be questioned, and often by competent authorities.

While there is truth in some of Mr. Wright's strictures, the majority of these, it seems to us, are hardly fair. The collections of the greatest European Museums contain questionable and unrepresentative canvases, many of them. Why then, should the Metropolitan be blamed for lapses?

Of recent years there has been much, and good, weeding out of its pictures by the Museum authorities and the general average of the canvases it owns, is improving constantly.

The Museum is the great and leading art Institution of the country. It should be supported by kindly, not adverse criticism and while we ourselves opine that it should pay more attention to the building up and strengthening of its collection of early Americans—we also believe that, in general, its pictures are wonderfully good, under its conditions—lack of funds for many years, changing Boards of Trustees, and Directors, the small and constantly lessening output of good examples of old and modern Masters the world over, and the red tape that inevitably hampers the management and progress of all public or semi-public institutions.

We have published portions of Mr. Wright's article, simply because we believe that he has by said article, unconsciously complimented the Metropolitan as we have above explained.

CORRESPONDENCE

Rockefeller and Aphrodite.

Dear Sir: Having read in your August issue an article entitled "Rockefeller and Aphrodite," telling the story of the purchase by Mr. John D. Rockefeller of the Statue, recalls to me my efforts on behalf of the then reputed owner of the work, Mr. F. Linton, now deceased, to whom I was presented by Mr. Charles de Kay shortly after my arrival from England in this country in 1909.

My visit to America was made in order solely to place on view a collection of old Masters at my studio near the National Arts Club then in West 34th Street, New York. Mr. de Kay suggested an exhibition of these at the Arts Club, and through the kindness of Mr. F. Linton the "Aphrodite" was unearthed from her long sojourn in the Columbia Storage Warehouse, where she had for many years, rested in seclusion, and placed in the centre of the large gallery of the Arts Club, making an important feature of the fine exhibit, and exciting much discussion.

Following History of Statue.

After six weeks this exhibition closed, and the statue was removed again to her former resting place in storage.

Meeting Mr. Linton one day at the Arts Club I suggested he send the Aphrodite to my studio in 34th Street, and I would endeavor to effect its sale. This he acceded to, and the statue there was admired by a select number of connoisseurs, but still the question of authenticity always balked a sale. Finally, having the acquaintance and friendship of the late Sir Purdon Clarke, then Director of the Metropolitan Museum, I endeavored to obtain his influence to further the purchase of the Aphrodite for the Museum, but the Directors declined on the grounds of lacking the necessary purchase price of \$150,000. I again approached Sir Purdon and asked him, in event of my obtaining a purchaser would he accept on behalf of the Museum a gift of the statue—to which he acceded. I finally found a wealthy Western man who accepted by proposition, and having apprised Sir Purdon of my efforts, we together decided upon the place where "Aphrodite" was to stand in the Museum.

The Deal Called Off.

The \$100,000 which Mr. Linton had agreed to accept was about to be paid over, when the Equitable Life Insurance troubles came on and my buyer withdrew his offer for the time being, promising if the money market improved by Spring he would be willing to carry out his first proposition.

As Spring approached I prepared to return to England and business in Wall Street had not really improved, so Aphrodite was again placed in captivity by her owner, and I returned to Europe.

In British Museum.

To my great surprise, accidentally meeting Mr. Charles de Kay in London and questioning him one day as to what had become of "Aphrodite," he remarked that he had been commissioned to effect her sale in Europe and hoped to influence the Directors of the British Museum to place the statue there "on view." This Mr. de Kay accomplished, in so far as the exhibition was concerned, but his efforts to induce the Museum to purchase were of no avail.

French Critical Opinion.

After many meetings both in Paris and London with Mr. de Kay respecting the "Aphrodite" I know that, although he prevailed upon Rodin to give this opinion as many other artists did, of the work, they all refrained from an absolute and positive opinion of its being the work of Praxiteles, as its owners claimed.

British Museum Director's Opinion.

Through a transaction which involved an ancient Egyptian lamp I, at this time, through the courtesy of the late Mr. J. Pierpont Morgan, formed the acquaintance of Mr. Smith, the authority on early Greek art at the British Museum. He then informed me that if I cared for his opinion on any early Greek art work at any time, he would gladly give it to me. Not having heard for some time of the "Aphrodite," I called upon Mr. Smith, desiring to have his opinion and directly after admission to his office and stating the purpose of my visit, he smilingly said: "Why Miss Schanck that statue is an old Roman work, very beautiful but not ancient Greek. No doubt, to my mind, the artist conceived the idea after the Venus de Medici, as the likeness is very pronounced in its pose and features. This is why the British Museum did not purchase the statue. The last is the second time the work has been exhibited in the Museum, the first having been some twenty years ago, and it was then rejected as a purchase, for the same reason as now." He informed me he believed the statue had been returned to America.

It would be interesting to know how and when the Aphrodite passed from its owners whom Mr. Linton represented, to the dealers who sold it to Mr. Rockefeller.

After these few years of silence during which I frequently was asked by my friends "What has become of the beautiful Aphrodite?" I am very much astonished to learn of the purchase by Mr. John D. Rockefeller of the statue and offer my congratulations on the purchase, position and place he has given it, in his beautiful grounds at Pocantico Hills.

A. Schenck.

New York, Oct. 19, 1915.

OBITUARY.

Frank T. Sabin.

Frank T. Sabin, the well-known London dealer in prints and pictures, and who was almost as well known to the art trade and collectors here as in Europe, as he spent many years of his younger life in this country, died in London October 1 last.

Mr. Sabin was a man of most genial and agreeable personality and was greatly liked and esteemed by a host of American friends and patrons, who will be grieved and shocked at the news of his death. Exceedingly well read and cultivated, he was also an authority on early English and American prints and on Americana in general.

He had a gallery on Shaftesbury Ave., London, for many years after his return to his native land, but some eight years ago removed to 172 New Bond St., where his handsome rooms and the fine prints, old books and pictures he there assembled, were an attraction for many American friends and collectors. Mr. Sabin was one of the oldest friends and patrons of the AMERICAN ART NEWS which, in common with a host of friends in this country and Europe, deeply mourns his loss.

Mrs. Richard Newton, Jr.

The many friends of Mr. Thomas B. Clarke and his family, and of the artist, Richard Newton, Jr., are deeply grieved at the comparatively sudden death, following a brief illness, last week, of Mrs. Richard Newton, Jr., formerly Miss Grace Clarke, at her home, No. 22 East 35 St.

Mrs. Newton inherited her father's artistic taste and interest. She was a young woman of rare sweetness of character, and was greatly esteemed and beloved. The sympathies of an unusually wide circle of friends go out to Mr. and Mrs. Clarke and Mr. Newton in their sad bereavement.

L. Clarence Ball.

L. Clarence Ball, landscape painter in oil and water color, died Oct. 9 in South Bend, Ind., at the age of 50. He had contributed to the Indiana Art Exhibit and the displays of the Society of Western Artists. He leaves a widow.